

ADMINISTRATIVE-INTERNAL USE ONLY

21 September 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, CSPO

STAT FROM:
Chief, Analytic Support Group, CPAS

SUBJECT: Comments on Report

REFERENCE: Project SAFE Report to Congress,
15 Sept 1982

1. We have reviewed the referenced report, as you requested. We have substantial problems in two major areas--a data base management system (DBMS) and electronic mail--and concerns in some other areas.

2. The planning for a SAFE Early Capability (SEC) discusses an improved Pilot Mail Operation (PMO) and the addition of an electronic mail capability (AIM). We have no problem with PMO; the concepts have been well tested by analysts, and given the improved reliability, availability, and response time, we believe that it will be successful. However, we consider it inadvisable to select or implement an electronic mail package which has not had similar testing by analysts. Even if AIM is not being used to satisfy any of SAFE requirements, it should not be chosen as a test system without analyst involvement and without an opportunity for analysts to examine alternatives such as PROFS. For any similar enhancements or offerings, we would prefer to run a test program, with user involvement such as we had with the PMO, before making them widely available. We would help with such a test program.

3. Our second major problem is with the statements concerning the DBMS. As I indicated to you in my memorandum of 15 July 1982, our requirements have changed since 1980. These changes are likely to include the need for data element relationships not spelled out in the original SAFE documentation. It is our hope that the SAFE DBMS will answer most of the needs of the DI; these may well include a structured database outside of the requirements of the original SAFE. The changes are also likely to include the need for an interface, or link, between the DBMS and a graphic/imagery software package. This latter need is a growing one within the DI; any DBMS which is selected for SAFE must, at least, be able to interface with commonly used graphics and statistical packages such as TELAGRAF and SAS.

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4. We have other concerns. Neither the Agency commitment to the Wang word processor nor the DI commitment to an automated publication process were embedded in the existing SAFE requirements. Yet the Wang, at least, should affect planning for SAFE's "compose" capability.

5. Also, we question the wisdom of investing 2-3 million dollars to modify off-the-shelf software so that it can perform functions identified by DI as necessary when the functions do not exist in the selected software. Once the modifications are made, we end up with a unique package not likely to be supported by the vendor. This then introduces all the subsequent maintenance costs associated with dedicated software. In effect, we lose all the benefits furnished by vendor off-the-shelf software. We believe that it would be wiser to pay the vendor to enhance his standard package so that at least some of the additional capabilities are part of future releases of the package and will therefore be maintained by the vendor.

6. None of these problems should stand in the way of the delivery of a SAFE early capability next Spring. But they are serious enough to require extensive attention by both our staffs in planning for later deliveries.

7. The SAFE audit report identified a major problem of previous SAFE development (Audit Report executive summary, p.5): "During the design process, the developers had little access to the end-users. The lack of insight into user needs coupled with management inflexibility in revising requirements led to emphasizing the wrong things." We both need to work to avoid this as a future criticism of current SAFE development.

STAT



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